

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Diamond Antenna Microwave Corp

Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Picking up the Signal -- Lean Becomes the Lifestyle at Diamond Antenna

Client Profile:

Since 1956, Diamond Antenna has delivered precision microwave rotary couplers for use in radar and satellite communication antennas. Experience with the exacting tolerances necessary for microwave signal transfer is the basis for Diamond's core competence in precision rotary component design and manufacture. The company employs 38 people at its facility in Littleton, Massachusetts.

Situation:

"There were a few areas that needed to be 'Leaned' at the company," said Diamond Antenna's President Jeff Gilling, who believed it was time for them to move forward. The Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Mass MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, was recommended as a resource to assist the company in getting their business organized and ready for growth.

Solution:

Mass MEP's Jim Gusha and Greg King visited Diamond Antenna to discuss their needs and were able to help them obtain Workforce Training Fund Grants to support their improvement efforts. Project manager Tim Wadlow and other Mass MEP staff facilitated events with employee groups. Training included TimeWise Le102, basic Lean for job shops to help familiarize Diamond employees with Lean terms and tools; Value Stream Mapping (VSM) to map out a process as it is currently done, identify deficiencies and make improvements; and 5S Kaizen events to help the company clean, sort, and reorganize areas within the business so they function more efficiently. Theresa McCarthy, an associate from the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NHMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, assisted a team from Diamond Antenna with their internal auditor training for ISO9001-2000. The Value Stream Mapping exercises identified specific areas that the company could improve upon. Areas were reorganized into work cells and the company focused on cross training the employees. 5S organization helped Diamond Antenna manage jobs and work orders. Through an effective scheduling mechanism and buying capacity, the company has maintained growth. Less than 1 percent of the units through final assembly have to be reworked, resulting in zero returns for warranty claims. "Lean training made Diamond more competitive," said Tim Wadlow. "Initially there were skeptics who said that Lean could not work in a job shop, but they found that using 5S to reduce travel distance and using a cellular layout in a high volume area had great results." As a result of Mass MEP's assistance, Diamond Antenna has seen improvements in quality, inventory control and cost savings. Employee morale and productivity have also improved.

Results:

- * Increased sales by over \$2 million.
- * Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Testimonial:

"Mass MEP represents the competencies in the area of manufacturing that allow us to develop advantages in the marketplace. Core competencies and market opportunities leverage into a competitive advantage. The assistance we received from the Mass MEP was right on target; they will certainly be a resource we will use again in the future."

Jeffrey Gilling, President